

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL PRESS RELEASE

News Flash

AI Index: AFR 62/024/2002 (Public)
News Service No: 225
5 December 2002

Democratic Republic of the Congo : The expansion of MONUC must be used to protect human rights where they are most seriously at risk

Amnesty International welcomes the decision of the UN Security Council (Resolution 1445 (2002)), taken on 4 December to expand the deployment of MONUC, the UN cease-fire monitoring body in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), to 8,700 military personnel .

According to the resolution the expanded MONUC will reinforce the existing task force in the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process, assist in the destruction of impounded weapons and munitions, and monitor the withdrawal of foreign troops from the territory of the DRC.

Amnesty International shares the Security Council's deep concern over the intensification of ethnically-targeted violence in the Ituri region of the country expressed in the resolution and strongly supports the Secretary General's request to increase the MONUC presence in Ituri, as security conditions permit.

Amnesty International agrees that there is an urgent need to reinforce MONUC's presence in the Ituri region, and in other regions of the DRC where killings are escalating, in order to prevent human rights abuses, dissuade further attacks against civilians by all parties and for MONUC to act within its mandate to protect both the civilian population and its personnel.

Positive action of this kind would fulfil MONUC's existing mandate as defined in Security Council Resolution 1291 of 24 February 2000 which states that "acting under chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations, the Security Council also decided that MONUC may take the necessary action, in the areas of deployment of its infantry battalions and as it deems it within its capabilities, to protect United Nations and co-located JMC personnel, facilities, installations and equipment, ensure the security and freedom of movement of its personnel, and protect civilians under imminent threat of physical violence."

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